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## CITY CHILDREN AND CRIME

pediency. In the jurisdictions referred to, the matter may be stated thus:

1. That the trial judge has the legal right to examine witnesses;
2. That the exercise of that right may be reviewed in the appellate court on the ground of abuse;
3. That some trial judges, at least, have exercised the right;
4. That the office of judge may be restored, if ever lost, "to the commanding position occupied at common law" by the mere exercise of the right.

In the opinion of the writer, the matter is reducible to these questions:

1. Shall the trial judge exercise the right at all?
2. If so, how far shall he go in individual cases?
3. Granting the right and its attempted exercise, is it not apparent that greater care should be taken by the public to choose and retain persons of experience, ability, and fairness, as trial judges?

In these days of complaint, will the public pay the salaries, guarantee the tenure of office and exercise discriminating care sufficient to attract and select proper persons to exercise the above power?

W. E. HIGGINS.

## CITY CHILDREN AND CRIME.

The report of a subcommittee of the committee on education of the City Club of Chicago, recently issued, contains material which should receive the serious attention and consideration of criminologists.

All social improvement must wait for education. But education must involve the development of habits of industry; of devoted application to a series of activities all of which, taken together, complete an adjustment of the worker to an aspect of his environment. Unfortunately there are thousands of young men and women in our cities who could do better but who, in the circumstances in which they are placed, are getting away from rather than moving toward those habits that make for social adjustment.

The report referred to indicates that in the city of Chicago there are 23,415 children at the crucial period of development—between fourteen and sixteen years of age—who are not in school. This is one and one-tenth per cent of the total population of the city. Over half of this number—11,750 to be explicit—are idle according to the census enumerators. The remainder, it is estimated, drifting as they do from one occupation to another, are actually employed only one-half of their time.

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Intermittent periods of idleness alternate with a few weeks of work. All this serves to develop that unsteadiness of purpose, irresponsibility of character, and irregularity of habit, which is the undoing of manhood and womanhood. It is not the least unfortunate aspect of this whole situation that fully one-third of the number quoted had not advanced beyond the fifth grade in the public schools before they went into the streets.

But what is all of this to the criminologist? Col. Adams, superintendent of the St. Charles School for Boys in this state, spoke at the Fifteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction in part, as follows: "Into the St. Charles School for Boys and all other similar schools throughout the country, boarding schools for delinquent boys, if you please, come the lads whom the courts have declared to be delinquent. *They are mostly from the large towns and great cities; occasionally there is one from the country and from the average and the smaller towns. The environment of the large percentage of the lads has been that of the slums, tenements and streets.* When we recall that the largest percentage of truancy and idleness is found among the denizens of such districts it is not a far cry to the conviction that if we could do no more than keep these young people away from the streets; if we could but get them into schools in which their interest may be directed forcibly to something else than to that antisocial behavior toward which so many in their ignorance are drifting; if we could do this we could accomplish much toward diminishing the train of juvenile offenders who are continually on their way to St. Charles and other similar institutions.

Furthermore, from a slightly different angle, the criminologist is properly interested in those who are employed during their whole time. They are at the lowest round of the ladder. What appears to many of them to be a vast confusion of means and ends is an impossible barrier to their imaginations. They do not see, neither can they see the possibilities that lie in the future for one who is industrious and painstaking. The tempters in the street find such youths an easy prey. This should suggest to the criminologist as it has already done to an army of workers in our public educational system that continuation day or evening classes, open for a few hours each week to employed children, may be of great moral value. They should open up the view of an honorable occupation to hundreds of boys and girls, and incite them to make their way upward. If so it is reasonable to assume that in such institutions we should have a check upon the development of juvenile offenders.

The Illinois branch of the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology has appointed a committee to take up the problem of education as

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a preventive of crime and, through its legislative committee, to recommend progressive legislation. Other organizations are at work. They are approaching the problem from the pedagogic or from the economic angle. Some of them have drafted bills but differences of opinion prevail with respect to the means that should be applied. The supremely important thing now is that these organizations or their representatives get together in conference so that all may reach the same platform and array themselves behind one legislative proposal, to the end that without division of opinion, we may unitedly ask for whatever legislation may be most effective in supplying the need of all.

Assuming that we have found, in the class of young people of whom we have been thinking, a source of danger to our institutions, and that education—vocational or otherwise—is an effective preventive, then it seems to me that the proper course is clear. Make attendance at educational institutions compulsory up to or beyond the sixteenth year of age as far as practicable for all youths, whether they are employed or not. If this could be made to apply to the whole state, well and good. If differentiation is necessary, then at least extend the legal school age in cities of a certain class in which there is inevitably a considerable body of idle youth. It must then be compulsory upon these cities to provide, no doubt with the assistance of the state at large, such educational facilities in the way of regular and vocational schools, etc., as will best meet the requirements of the situation. This will, of course, include the provision of part-time continuation classes for those of legal age who are in employment. In order that the special ends of the criminologist may be reached it is absolutely essential that legislation on the subject should be not only permissive but compulsory.

The plan is not revolutionary. The city of Cincinnati, acting under the laws of the state of Ohio, is now compelling working children of school age up to sixteen years who have not completed the eighth grade to attend continuation schools for four hours a week. With rare exceptions the authorities have the hearty co-operation of employers, and the result is highly satisfactory. This is distinctly in the direction of child welfare. With any movement whatever of which this can properly be said the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology can and will unhesitatingly identify itself. No organization can in common sense or in sound logic refrain from joining hands with others on that basis. Under that sign every society can ultimately attain its benevolent purposes.

ROBERT H. GAULT.